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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
WORLD CONFERENCE ON NATURAL
DISASTER REDUCTION
Geneva, 14-18 March 1994

REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION ON ITS SESSION

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Preparatory Committee held its session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 14 to 18 March 1994. The Preparatory Committee held three meetings (1st to 3rd). The Preparatory Committee decided to establish two working groups, which held a number of informal meetings.

2. The session was opened by the Director of the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

B. Attendance

3. The following States were represented: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, India, Iraq, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Malaysia, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

4. The following United Nations programmes were represented: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

5. The following specialized agencies were represented: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

6. The following international governmental organizations were represented: European Community, International Civil Defence Organization and Organization of African Unity.

7. The World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I, was represented.

8. The national committees of the International Decade on Natural Disaster Reduction from China and Switzerland were represented.

9. The city of Yokohama was represented by observers.

C. Election of officers

10. At the 1st meeting, on 14 March, the Preparatory Committee elected H.E. Ambassador Daniel D. C. Don Nanjira, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee by acclamation.

11. After his election, the Chairman made a statement.

12. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee elected by acclamation Colombia and the Philippines (Vice-Chairmen) as well as Japan (Vice-Chairman ex officio), and Mr. Klaus E. P. Holderbaum (Germany) Rapporteur. The Committee decided to postpone the election of a Vice-Chairman from among the Eastern European States to a later date.

D. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

13. At its 1st meeting, on 14 March, the Preparatory Committee adopted the provisional agenda contained in document A/CONF.172/PC/1, which read as follows:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Preparations for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction.

4. Accreditation of non-governmental organizations for participation in the Conference.

5. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee.

14. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee approved its organization of work as announced by the Chairman.

E. Documentation

15. The documents before the Preparatory Committee are listed in annex II.

II. PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

16. The Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 3 at its 1st to 3rd meetings, on 14, 16 and 18 March 1994. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the Conference (A/CONF.172/PC/2);

(b) Note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference (A/CONF.172/PC/L.1);

(c) Note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda and the proposed programme of work for the Conference (A/CONF.172/PC/L.4 and Add.1).

17. At the 1st meeting, on 14 March, the Director of the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction made an introductory statement.

18. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Japan, Germany, Nepal, Italy, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania and Tunisia.

19. At the same meeting, statements were made by the observers from the city of Yokohama, Japan.

20. At the 2nd meeting, on 16 March, statements were made by the representatives of Colombia, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Spain, Hungary, the Marshall Islands (also on behalf of Australia, Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), China and Greece.

A. Participation of associate members of the regional commissions in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process

21. At the 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, on behalf of the working group on procedures, introduced a draft decision (A/CONF.172/PC/L.6) entitled "Participation of associate members of the regional commissions in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process".

22. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft decision (see annex I, decision 1).

B. Provisional rules of procedure for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction

23. At the 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, on behalf of the working group on procedures, introduced a draft decision (A/CONF.172/PC/L.8, draft decision I) entitled "Provisional rules of procedure for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction".

24. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Nepal, Bangladesh and Ireland.

25. The Director of the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the Secretary of the Preparatory Committee responded to questions raised.

26. Also at the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft decision (see annex I, decision 2).

C. Organization of work of the Conference

27. At the 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, on behalf of the working group on procedures, introduced and orally amended a draft decision (A/CONF.172/PC/L.8, draft decision II) entitled "Organization of work of the Conference".

28. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Trinidad and Tobago, the United Republic of Tanzania, India, Morocco, Colombia, Canada, Austria and Germany.

29. The representative of Nigeria further orally amended the draft decision.

30. The Director of the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the Secretary of the Preparatory Committee responded to questions raised.

31. Also at the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft decision, as orally amended (see annex I, decision 3).

32. After the adoption of the draft decision, the representative of China made a statement.

33. The Preparatory Committee adopted the draft decision on the understanding that the plenary of the Conference would establish a drafting group, which would report to the Main Committee and which should begin consideration of item 11 of the provisional agenda on the first day of the Conference.

D. Provisional agenda for the Conference

34. At the 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, on behalf of the working group on procedures, introduced a draft decision (A/CONF.172/PC/L.8, draft decision III) entitled "Provisional agenda for the Conference".

35. Also at the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft decision (see annex I, decision 4).

E. Provisional programme of work for the Conference

36. At the 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, on behalf of the working group on procedures, introduced a draft decision (A/CONF.172/PC/L.8, draft decision IV) entitled "Provisional agenda for the Conference".

37. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania, Nigeria and Bangladesh.

38. The Director of the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction made a statement and the Secretary of the Preparatory Committee responded to questions raised.

39. Also at the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft decision (see annex I, decision 5).

F. Outline of a draft final document of the Conference

40. At the 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Chairman of the working group on the draft final document of the Conference (Philippines) introduced an informal paper entitled "Outline of a draft final document of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction containing proposals for a Plan of Action" and orally revised the text.

41. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of India, Denmark, Bangladesh, Algeria, Ireland, Egypt, Colombia, Norway, Nepal and Finland.

42. The Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee made a statement.

43. Also at the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee took note of the informal paper and decided to annex it to its report, authorized the members of the extended Bureau to hold further informal consultations on the draft text between 18 March 1994 and the beginning of the Conference in Yokohama, and requested the secretariat of the Decade to assist the extended Bureau in its deliberations on this matter (see annex I, decision 6).

44. Before the Preparatory Committee concluded its consideration of agenda item 3, the representative of Germany made a statement in which he congratulated the secretariat of the Decade and its Director for the quality of the preparatory work, in particular the documentation for the Preparatory Committee, given the short time available. He encouraged the secretariat to continue at that level of performance to and through the World Conference itself, and expressed his hope that the Secretary-General would expedite administrative arrangements for the Conference.

III. ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE

45. The Preparatory Committee considered agenda item 4 at its 1st meeting on 14 March. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General on the participation of non-governmental organizations in the Conference (A/CONF.172/PC/L.3).

46. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee decided to defer consideration of the item.

47. At the 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, on behalf of the working group on procedures, introduced a draft decision (A/CONF.172/PC/L.7) entitled "Participation of non-governmental organizations in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process".

48. At the same meeting, the representative of Egypt made a statement and orally amended the draft decision.

49. Also at the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft decision, as orally amended (see annex I, decision 7).

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

50. At its 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Preparatory Committee considered the draft report on its session (A/CONF.172/PC/L.5).

51. The Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee introduced the draft report of the Committee and orally corrected it. He praised the constructive spirit that had characterized the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee throughout its meetings, in plenary as well as in the two working groups.

52. At the same meeting, the representative of Bangladesh made a statement.

53. The observer for the Organization of African Unity made a statement.

54. Also at the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft report as orally amended.

V. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

55. The Preparatory Committee draws to the attention of the General Assembly a draft decision entitled "Participation of associate members of the regional commissions in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process" (for the text of the draft decision, see annex I, decision 1), which is before the Assembly for consideration and appropriate action.

ANNEX I

Decisions adopted by the Preparatory Committee

DECISION 1

Participation of associate members of the regional commissions in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process

At its 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction decided to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

The General Assembly decides that the representatives designated by associate members of the regional commissions may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, the preparatory process and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group.

DECISION 2

Provisional rules of procedure for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction

At its 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction decided to recommend to the Conference the adoption of the provisional rules of procedure, annexed to the present decision.

ANNEX

Provisional rules of procedure for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction

I. REPRESENTATION AND CREDENTIALS

Composition of delegations

Rule 1

The delegation of each State participating in the Conference shall consist of a head of delegation and such other representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

Alternates and advisers

Rule 2

The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

Submission of credentials

Rule 3

The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the Secretary-General of the Conference, if possible not less than one week before the date fixed for the opening of the Conference. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of the State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Credentials Committee

Rule 4

A Credentials Committee of nine members shall be appointed at the beginning of the Conference. Its composition shall be based on that of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its most recent session. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Conference without delay.

Provisional participation in the Conference

Rule 5

Pending a decision of the Conference upon their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the Conference.

II. OFFICERS

Elections

Rule 6

The Conference shall elect from the representatives of participating States a Bureau consisting of the following officers: a President and 25 Vice-Presidents, one of whom shall serve as Rapporteur-General. These officers shall be elected on the basis of ensuring the representative character of the General Committee. In addition, the Conference shall have four Vice-Presidents

ex officio. 1/ The Conference may also elect such other officers as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

General powers of the President

Rule 7

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him elsewhere by these rules, the President shall preside at the closing of each meeting, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. The President shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order thereat. The President may propose to the Conference the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times each representative may speak on a question, the adjournment or closure of the debate and the suspension or the adjournment of a meeting.

2. The President, in the exercise of his function, remains under the authority of the Conference.

Acting President

Rule 8

1. If the President is absent from a meeting or any part thereof, he shall designate one of the Vice-Presidents to take his place.

2. A Vice-President acting as President shall have the same powers and duties as the President.

Replacement of the President

Rule 9

If the President is unable to perform his functions, a new President shall be elected.

1/ The four ex officio Vice-Presidents will be the Chairmen of the Special High-level Council and of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Chairman of the Preparatory Group of the Scientific and Technical Committee for the Conference, and "the father" of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, Mr. Frank Press.

Voting rights of the President

Rule 10

The President, or a Vice-President acting as President, shall not vote in the Conference, but may appoint another member of his delegation to vote in his place.

III. GENERAL COMMITTEE

Composition

Rule 11

The President, the Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur-General, the Chairman of the Main Committee and the Chairmen of the Technical Committees shall constitute the General Committee. The President, or in his absence one of the Vice-Presidents designated by him, shall serve as Chairman of the General Committee. The Chairman of the Credentials Committee and other committees established by the Conference in accordance with rule 48 may participate, without the right to vote, in the General Committee.

Substitute members

Rule 12

If the President or a Vice-President of the Conference is to be absent during a meeting of the General Committee, he may designate a member of his delegation to sit and vote in the Committee. In case of absence, the Chairman of a Main Committee shall designate the Vice-Chairman of that Committee as his substitute. When serving on the General Committee, the Vice-Chairman of a Main Committee shall not have the right to vote if he is of the same delegation as another member of the General Committee.

Functions

Rule 13

The General Committee shall assist the President in the general conduct of the business of the Conference and, subject to the decisions of the Conference, shall ensure the coordination of its work.

IV. SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE

Duties of the Secretary-General of the Conference

Rule 14

1. The Secretary-General of the Conference shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary organs.

2. The Secretary-General of the Conference may designate a member of the secretariat to act in his place at these meetings.

3. The Secretary-General of the Conference shall direct the staff required by the Conference.

Duties of the secretariat

Rule 15

The secretariat of the Conference shall, in accordance with these rules:

(a) Interpret speeches made at meetings;

(b) Receive, translate, reproduce and circulate the documents of the Conference;

(c) Publish and circulate the official documents of the Conference;

(d) Prepare and circulate records of public meetings;

(e) Make and arrange for the keeping of sound recordings;

(f) Arrange for the custody and preservation of the documents of the Conference in the archives of the United Nations; and

(g) Generally perform all other work that the Conference may require.

Statements by the secretariat

Rule 16

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Conference, or any member of the secretariat designated by either for that purpose, may, at any time, make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

V. OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

Temporary President

Rule 17

The Secretary-General of the United Nations or, in his absence, the Secretary-General of the Conference, shall open the first meeting of the Conference and preside until the Conference has elected its President.

Decisions concerning organization

Rule 18

The Conference shall at its first meeting:

(a) Adopt its rules of procedure;

(b) Elect its officers and constitute its subsidiary organs;

(c) Adopt its agenda, the draft of which shall until such adoption be the provisional agenda of the Conference;

(d) Decide on the organization of its work.

VI. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Quorum

Rule 19

The President may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the representatives of the States participating in the Conference are present. The presence of representatives of a majority of the States so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.

Speeches

Rule 20

1. No one may address the Conference without having previously obtained the permission of the President. Subject to rules 21, 22 and 24 to 27, the President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The secretariat shall be in charge of drawing up a list of speakers.

2. Debate shall be confined to the question before the Conference and the President may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

3. The Conference may limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each participant may speak on any question. Permission to speak on a motion to set such limits shall be accorded only to two representatives in favour of and to two opposing such limits, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. In any event, with the consent of the Conference, the President shall limit each intervention on procedural matters to five minutes. When the debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the President shall call him to order without delay.

Points of order

Rule 21

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with these rules. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the representatives present and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Precedence

Rule 22

The Chairman or Rapporteur of a Main Committee, the Chairmen or Rapporteurs of the Technical Committees, or the representative of a subcommittee or working group may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by the body concerned.

Closing of the list of speakers

Rule 23

During the course of a debate, the President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Conference, declare the list closed.

Right of reply

Rule 24

1. Notwithstanding rule 23, the President shall accord the right of reply to a representative of any State participating in the Conference who requests it. Any other representative may be granted the opportunity to make a reply.

2. The statements made under this rule shall normally be made at the end of the last meeting of the day, or at the conclusion of the consideration of the relevant item if that is sooner.

3. The representatives of a State may make no more than two statements under this rule at a given meeting on any item. The first shall be limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes; representatives shall in any event attempt to be as brief as possible.

Adjournment of debate

Rule 25

A representative may at any time move the adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two representatives in favour and to two opposing the adjournment, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

Closure of debate

Rule 26

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate on the question under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified his wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two representatives opposing the closure, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

Suspension or adjournment of the meeting

Rule 27

Subject to rule 38, a representative may at any time move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. No discussion on such motions shall be permitted and they shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

Order of motions

Rule 28

The motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all proposals or other motions before the meeting:

(a) To suspend the meeting;

(b) To adjourn the meeting;

(c) To adjourn the debate on the question under discussion;

(d) To close the debate on the question under discussion.

Submission of proposals and substantive amendments

Rule 29

Proposals and substantive amendments shall normally be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General of the Conference, who shall circulate copies to all delegations. Unless the Conference decides otherwise, substantive proposals shall be discussed or put to a decision no earlier than 24 hours after copies have been circulated in all languages of the Conference to all delegations. The President may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments, even though these amendments have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.

Withdrawal of proposals and motions

Rule 30

A proposal or a motion may be withdrawn by its sponsor at any time before a decision on it has been taken, provided that it has not been amended. A proposal or a motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any representative.

Decisions on competence

Rule 31

Subject to rule 28, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Conference to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

Reconsideration of proposals

Rule 32

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered unless the Conference, by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing reconsideration, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote.

VII. DECISION-MAKING

General agreement

Rule 33

The Conference shall make its best endeavours to ensure that the work of the Conference is accomplished by general agreement.

Voting rights

Rule 34

Each State participating in the Conference shall have one vote.

Majority required

Rule 35

1. Subject to rule 33, decisions of the Conference on all matters of substance shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting.

2. Except as otherwise provided in these rules, decisions of the Conference on all matters of procedure shall be taken by a majority of the representatives present and voting.

3. If the question arises whether a matter is one of procedure or of substance, the President of the Conference shall rule on the question. An appeal against this ruling shall be put to the vote immediately, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the representatives present and voting.

4. If a vote is equally divided, the proposal or motion shall be regarded as rejected.

Meaning of the phrase "representatives present and voting"

Rule 36

For the purpose of these rules, the phrase "representatives present and voting" means representatives casting an affirmative or negative vote. Representatives who abstain from voting shall be regarded as not voting.

Method of voting

Rule 37

1. Except as provided in rule 44, the Conference shall normally vote by show of hands, except that a representative may request a roll-call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the States participating in the Conference, beginning with the delegation whose name is drawn by lot by the President. The name of each State shall be called in all roll-calls, and its representative shall reply "yes", "no" or "abstention".

2. When the Conference votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of hands and a recorded vote shall replace a roll-call. A representative may request a recorded vote, which shall, unless a representative requests otherwise, be taken without calling out the names of the States participating in the Conference.

3. The vote of each State participating in a roll-call or a recorded vote shall be inserted in any record of or report on the meeting.

Conduct during voting

Rule 38

After the President has announced the commencement of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the process of voting.

Explanation of vote

Rule 39

Representatives may make brief statements consisting solely of explanations of vote, before the voting has commenced or after the voting has been completed. The President may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations. The representative of a State sponsoring a proposal or motion shall not speak in explanation of vote thereon, except if it has been amended.

Division of proposals

Rule 40

A representative may move that parts of a proposal be decided on separately. If a representative objects, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two representatives in favour of and to two opposing the division. If the motion is carried, those parts of the proposal that are subsequently approved shall be put to the Conference for decision as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal have been rejected, the proposal shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Amendments

Rule 41

A proposal is considered an amendment to another proposal it if merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal. Unless specified otherwise, the word "proposal" in these rules shall be considered as including amendments.

Order of voting on amendments

Rule 42

When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Conference shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom and so on until all the amendments have been put to the vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter shall not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

Order of voting on proposals

Rule 43

1. If two or more proposals, other than amendments, relate to the same question, they shall, unless the Conference decides otherwise, be voted on in the order in which they were submitted. The Conference may after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

2. Revised proposals shall be voted on in the order in which the original proposals were submitted, unless the revision substantially departs from the original proposal. In that case the original proposal shall be considered as withdrawn and the revised proposal shall be treated as a new proposal.

3. A motion requiring that no decision be taken on a proposal shall be put to the vote before a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

Elections

Rule 44

All elections shall be held by secret ballot unless, in the absence of any objection, the Conference decides to proceed without taking a ballot when there is an agreed candidate or slate.

Rule 45

1. When one or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast and the largest number of votes, shall be elected.

2. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of places to be filled, additional ballots shall be held to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled.

VIII. SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Main Committee

Rule 46

The Conference may establish a Main Committee as required which may set up subcommittees or working groups.

Representation on the Main Committee

Rule 47

Each State participating in the Conference may be represented by one representative on the Main Committee established by the Conference. It may assign to these Committees such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

Technical Committees, other committees and working groups

Rule 48

1. In addition to the Main Committee referred to above, the Conference may establish Technical Committees and such other committees and working groups as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

2. Each committee may set up subcommittees and working groups.

Rule 49

1. The members of the committees and working groups of the Conference, referred to in rule 48, paragraph 1, shall be appointed by the President, subject to the approval of the Conference, unless the Conference decides otherwise.

2. Members of the subcommittees and working groups of committees shall be appointed by the Chairman of the committee in question, subject to the approval of that committee, unless the committee decides otherwise.

Officers

Rule 50

Except as otherwise provided in rule 6, each committee, subcommittee and working group shall elect its own officers.

Quorum

Rule 51

1. The Chairman of the Main Committee may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when representatives of at least one quarter of the States participating in the Conference are present. The presence of representatives of a majority of the States so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken. No quorum shall be necessary for the Chairman of a Technical Committee to declare the meeting open.

2. A majority of the representatives of the General or Credentials Committee, the Technical Committee, or of any other committee, subcommittee or working group shall constitute a quorum.

Officers, conduct of business and voting

Rule 52

The rules contained in chapters II, VI (except rule 19) and VII above shall be applicable, mutatis mutandis, to the proceedings of committees, subcommittees and working groups, except that:

(a) The Chairman of the General and Credentials Committees, the Chairmen of the Technical Committees, and the chairmen of other committees, subcommittees and working groups may exercise the right to vote, and

(b) Decisions of committees, subcommittees and working groups shall be taken by a majority of the representatives present and voting, except that the reconsideration of a proposal or an amendment shall require the majority established by rule 32.

IX. LANGUAGES AND RECORDS

Languages of the Conference

Rule 53

Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the languages of the Conference.

Interpretation

Rule 54

1. Speeches made in a language of the Conference shall be interpreted into the other such languages.

2. A representative may speak in a language other than a language of the Conference if the delegation concerned provides for interpretation into one such language.

Languages of official documents

Rule 55

Official documents of the Conference shall be made available in the languages of the Conference.

Sound recordings of the meetings

Rule 56

Sound recordings of meetings of the Conference, of the Main Committee, or of any Technical Committee shall be made and kept in accordance with the practice of the United Nations. Unless otherwise decided by the Conference, the Main Committee, or the Technical Committee concerned, no such recordings shall be made of the meetings of any working group thereof.

X. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEETINGS

General principles

Rule 57

The plenary meetings of the Conference and the meetings of any committee shall be held in public unless the body concerned decides otherwise. All decisions taken by the plenary of the Conference at a private meeting shall be announced at an early public meeting of the Plenary.

Rule 58

As a general rule, meetings of the General Committee, subcommittees or working groups shall be held in private.

Communiqués on private meetings

Rule 59

At the close of a private meeting, the presiding officer of the organ concerned may issue a communiqué through the Secretary-General of the Conference.

XI. OTHER PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

Representatives of organizations that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the capacity of observers in the sessions and work of all international conferences convened under its auspices

Rule 60

Representatives designated by organizations that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the session and work of all international conferences convened under its auspices have the right to participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee, and, as appropriate, any Technical Committee, other committee or working group.

Representatives of national liberation movements

Rule 61

Representatives designated by national liberation movements invited to the Conference may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee, and, as appropriate, any Technical Committee, other committee or working group on any matter of particular concern to those movements.

Representatives of the specialized agencies

Rule 62

Representatives designated by the specialized agencies may participate, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee, and, as appropriate, any Technical Committee, other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Representatives of other intergovernmental organizations

Rule 63

Representatives designated by other intergovernmental organizations invited to the Conference may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee, and, as appropriate, any Technical Committee, other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Representatives of interested United Nations organs

Rule 64

Representatives designated by interested organs of the United Nations may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee, and, as appropriate, any Technical Committee, other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Representatives of non-governmental organizations

Rule 65

1. Non-governmental organizations invited to the Conference may designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Conference, the Main Committee, and, as appropriate, any Technical Committee, other committee or working group.

2. Upon the invitation of the presiding officer of the conference body concerned and subject to the approval of that body, such observers may make oral statements on questions in which they have special competence.

Members of the Special High-level Council and of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and representatives of National Committees for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, of Scientific Associations and of the Private Sector

Rule 66

Members of the Special High-level Council and of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and representatives of National Committees for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, of scientific associations, and of the private sector invited to the Conference may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any Technical Committee, other committee or working group.

Written statements

Rule 67

Written statements submitted by the designated representative referred to in rules 60 to 66 shall be distributed by the Secretariat to all delegations in the quantities and in the language in which the statements are made available to it at the site of the Conference, provided that a statement submitted on behalf

of an non-governmental organization is related to the work of the Conference and is on a subject in which the organization has a special competence. Written statements shall not be made at United Nations expense and shall not be issued as official documents.

XII. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Method of suspension

Rule 68

Any of these rules may be suspended by the Conference provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given, which may be waived if no representative objects. Any such suspension shall be limited to a specific and stated purpose and to a period required to achieve that purpose.

Method of amendment

Rule 69

These rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the Conference taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, after the General Committee has reported on the proposed amendment.

DECISION 3

Organization of work of the Conference

At its 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction decided to recommend to the Conference that:

(a) The plenary of the Conference establish one Main Committee to consider the substantive item or items before the Conference and a number of Technical Committees to allow an expanded review and analysis of specific topics particularly relevant to disaster reduction;

(b) Subject to a decision of the plenary of the Conference, the Main Committee should establish subcommittees or working groups as required, particularly with regard to the drafting of the final outcome of the Conference;

(c) The Conference elect 25 Vice-Presidents, distributed on the following basis:

African States	7
Asian States	5
Eastern European States	3
Latin American and Caribbean States	5
Western European and other States	5

(d) The Conference shall have the following four Vice-Presidents ex officio: the Chairmen of the Special High-level Council and of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Chairman of the Preparatory Group of the Scientific and Technical Committee for the Conference, and "the father" of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, Mr. Frank Press.

DECISION 4

Provisional agenda for the Conference

At its 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction decides to recommend to the Conference the adoption of the provisional agenda of the Conference, as contained in the annex to the present decision.

ANNEX

Provisional agenda for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction

1. Opening of the Conference.

2. Election of the President.

3. Adoption of the rules of procedure.

4. Adoption of the agenda.

5. Election of officers other than the President.

6. Organization of work, including the establishment of committees.

7. Credentials of representatives to the Conference:

   (a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee;

   (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.

8. Activities for natural disaster reduction.

9. Programmes and policies of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction:

   (a) Regional reports;

   (b) Public and private sector interface.

10. Natural disaster reduction:

   (a) Vulnerable communities;

   (b) Hazard resistant structures;

   (c) Effects of disasters on modern societies;

   (d) Interrelationships between technological and natural hazards;

   (e) Economic aspects of disaster reduction for sustainable development;

   (f) Warning systems;

   (g) Drought management.

11. Outcome of the Conference, including a plan of action for natural disaster reduction.

12. Adoption of the report of the Conference.

DECISION 5

Provisional programme of work for the Conference

At its 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction decided to recommend to the Conference the adoption of the proposed programme of work for the Conference, as annexed to the present decision:

ANNEX

Provisional programme of work for the Conference

Sunday, 22 May

p.m. Pre-Conference consultations

Plenary

Monday, 23 May

a.m. and p.m.	Item 1	Opening of the Conference
	Item 2	Election of the President
	Item 3	Adoption of the rules of procedure
	Item 4	Adoption of the agenda
	Item 5	Election of officers other than the President
	Item 6	Organization of work, including the establishment of committees
	Item 7	Credentials of representatives to the Conference:
		(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee
	Item 8	Activities for natural disaster reduction
	Item 7	Credentials of representatives to the Conference:
		(b) Report of the Credentials Committee

Tuesday, 24 May and Wednesday, 25 May

p.m.*	Item 8	Activities for natural disaster reduction [conclusion]

Friday, 27 May

a.m. and p.m.	Item 12	Adoption of the report of the Conference

* Extended as necessary to accommodate the list of speakers.

Main Committee

Tuesday, 24 May

a.m.	Item 11	Outcome of the Conference, including a plan of action for natural disaster reduction
	Item 9	Programmes and policies of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction:
		(b) Public and private sector interface

Wednesday, 25 May

a.m.	Item 9	Programmes and policies of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction:
		(a) Regional reports

Thursday, 26 May

a.m.	Item 9	Programmes and policies of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction [conclusion]:
		(a) Regional reports (continued)
p.m.	Item 11	Outcome of the Conference, including a plan of action for natural disaster reduction [conclusion]
		Adoption of the report to the Plenary

Technical Committees

Monday, 23 May

p.m.	Item 10	Natural disaster reduction:
		(a) Vulnerable communities

Tuesday, 24 May

a.m.	Item 10	Natural disaster reduction: [continued]:
		(b) Hazard resistant structures
p.m.	Item 10	Natural disaster reduction: [continued]:
		(c) Effects of disasters on modern societies

Wednesday, 25 May

a.m.	Item 10	Natural disaster reduction: [continued]:
		(d) Interrelationships between technological and natural hazards
p.m.	Item 10	Natural disaster reduction: [continued]:
		(e) Economic aspects of disaster reduction for sustainable development

Thursday, 26 May

a.m.	Item 10	Natural disaster reduction: [continued]:
		(f) Warning systems
p.m.	Item 10	(g) Drought management

DECISION 6

Outline of a draft final document for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction

At its 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction:

(a) Took note of the outline of a draft final document for the Conference and decided to annex it to its report;

(b) Authorized the members of the extended Bureau, which would be open to members of all interested delegations and representatives of the United Nations system and the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Decade, to hold further informal consultations on the text before the opening of the Conference;

(c) Requested the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction to assist the extended Bureau in its deliberations.

DECISION 7

Participation of non-governmental organizations in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process

At its 3rd meeting, on 18 March, the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction decided to adopt the following procedures for participation of non-governmental organizations in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process:

1. Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council which express their wish to attend the Conference and its Preparatory Committee meetings shall be accredited for participation. Others wishing to be accredited may apply to the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction for this purpose.

2. The secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction shall be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation of requests from non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the Conference and its preparatory process.

3. All such applications must be accompanied by information on the organization's competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, indicating the particular areas of the Conference preparations to which such competence and relevance pertain.

4. In cases where the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction believes, on the basis of the information provided, that the organization has established its competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, it will recommend to the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee that the organization be accredited. The list to be presented to the Bureau will be circulated to all Member States for information and appropriate action.

5. The Bureau of the Preparatory Committee will decide on all proposals for accreditation. The list of accredited non-governmental organizations will be circulated to all Member States.

6. In recognition of the intergovernmental nature of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, non-governmental organizations shall have no negotiating role in the work of the Conference and its preparatory process.

ANNEX II

Documents before the Preparatory Committee at its first session

Document number	Agenda item	Title or description
A/CONF.172/PC/1	2	Annotated provisional agenda
A/CONF.172/PC/2	3	Report of the Secretary-General on the organizational and substantive preparations for the World Conference, its agenda, and programme of work
A/CONF.172/PC/L.1	3	Note by the Secretariat containing the draft rules of procedure for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction
A/CONF.172/PC/L.2		Note by the Secretariat on the outline of a draft final document for the Conference containing proposals for a plan of action
A/CONF.172/PC/L.3	4	Note by the Secretary-General on the accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the Conference
A/CONF.172/PC/L.4 and Add.1	3	Provisional agenda for the Conference and proposed programme of work
A/CONF.172/PC/L.5	5	Draft report of the Preparatory Committee
A/CONF.172/PC/L.6	3	Participation of associate members of the regional commissions in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process: draft decision
A/CONF.172/PC/L.7	4	Participation of non-governmental organizations in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process: draft decision
A/CONF.172/PC/L.8	3	Draft decisions before the Preparatory Committee

Document number	Agenda item	Title or description
A/CONF.172/PC/L.9	3	Outline of a draft final document for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, containing proposals for a plan of action:
A/CONF.172/PC/Inf.1		List of documents
A/CONF.172/PC/Inf.2-IDNDR/STC/1993/12		Report of the Scientific and Technical Committee on its fifth session
A/CONF/172/PC/Inf.3		Provisional list of participants

ANNEX III

Outline of a draft final document for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, containing proposals for a plan of action

The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World

Guidelines for (natural) disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation

The States participating in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, convened at Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994,

Recognizing the rapidly rising world-wide economic and human toll of economic losses due to natural disasters,

Recalling the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989 to launch a far-reaching global undertaking for the 1990s to save human lives and reduce the impact of natural disasters,

Recalling the forward-looking decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 to adopt an integrated approach for disaster management in all its aspects and to initiate a process towards a global culture of prevention,

Recognizing that sustainable development cannot be achieved in many countries without adequate measures to reduce disaster losses, and that there are close linkages between disaster losses and environmental degradation, as emphasized in Agenda 21, 1/

Reaffirming the relevance of the Rio Declaration on the Environment, 2/ in particular Principle 18, which stresses the need for the international community to assist States afflicted by natural disasters and other emergencies that are likely to produce sudden harmful effects in the environment of those States,

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1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8), resolution 1, annex II.

2/ Ibid., annex I.

Emphasizing the need for the United Nations system to pay special attention to the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries, and recalling in this regard that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s called for giving priority attention to least developed countries in the activities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction,

Responding to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 48/188 of 23 December 1993 to:

(a) Review the accomplishments of the Decade at national, regional and international levels;

(b) Chart a programme of action for the future;

(c) Exchange information on the implementation of Decade programmes and policies;

(d) Increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies;

The States, participants in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction,

At the time of reaching the mid-point of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, reaffirming our commitment to pursuing, through national and international efforts, the transformation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade into a decisive intersectoral Plan of Action,

In a new spirit of partnership to build a safer world, based on common interest, sovereign equality and shared responsibility to save human lives, protect property and ensure progress and stability,

While generally recognizing that each country bears the primary responsibility of protecting its own people, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of natural disasters, and accepting at the same time that, in the context of increasing global interdependence, an enabling international environment is vital to the success of these national efforts,

Adopt the following principles, strategy and plan of action.

I. PRINCIPLES

(Executive summary of the World Conference)

Explanatory note

The informal preparatory process has shown that if the Yokohama document is to reach both the political decision makers and the private sector of society with an attractive and sellable message that creates interest and generates will for action, it should comprise a declaratory part and a well-defined set of recommendations and activities (plan of action); the document could be used as a whole or each section separately. This section (I) will be the declaratory part and its text should be based on the following points.

1. Risk assessment is a required step for the adoption of adequate and successful disaster reduction policies and measures.

2. Disaster prevention and preparedness are of primary importance in reducing the need for disaster relief.

3. Disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation should be considered as important aspects of development policy and planning at the national, bilateral, multilateral and international levels.

4. Early warnings and the effective dissemination of such information are the keys to disaster prevention and reduction.

5. Preventive measures are most effective when they involve participation at all levels, from the local community through the national government to the international level.

6. Vulnerability can be reduced by the application of proper design and patterns of development focused on target groups, by appropriate education and training of the whole community, and by transfer of technology.

7. Environmental protection as a component of sustainable development consistent with poverty alleviation is imperative in the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters.

8. Each country bears the primary responsibility for protecting its people, infrastructure, and other national assets from the impact of natural disasters. The international community should demonstrate strong political determination required to mobilize adequate resources and make use of existing resources, including financial, scientific and technological means, in the field of natural disaster reduction, bearing in mind the needs of the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries.

A. Basis for the Strategy

Explanatory note

This chapter should get the message across primarily to political decision makers and the general public that the basic principles of the Decade are as valid as ever, and that urgent, concerted action is required if the Decade's implementation is to succeed during its second half. Therefore, the principles must be restated in the light of the experience gained since 1989.

1. Natural disasters continue to strike and increase in magnitude, complexity, frequency and economic impact; urgent action is required.

2. The phenomena causing natural disasters are in most cases beyond human control. Society, therefore, must recognize and strengthen traditional ways and explore new ways to live with such risk, and take actions to prevent as well as to reduce the effects of such disasters.

3. The least developed countries, small island and land-locked countries are the most vulnerable countries, as they are the least equipped to mitigate the effects of disasters.

4. Developing countries affected by desertification, drought and other types of natural disasters are also equally vulnerable and least equipped to mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

5. In all countries the poor and socially disadvantaged groups suffer most from natural disasters and are least equipped to cope with them.

6. Disasters contribute to social, economic, cultural and political disruption in urban and rural contexts, each in its specific way. Large-scale urban concentrations are particularly fragile because of their complexity and the accumulation of population and infrastructures in limited areas.

7. Some patterns of consumption, production and development have the potential for increasing the vulnerability to natural disasters, particularly of the poor and socially disadvantaged groups. Sustainable development can contribute to the reduction of this vulnerability, if it is so planned and managed that it ameliorates the social and economic conditions of the affected groups and communities.

8. Vulnerable developing countries should be enabled to revive, apply and share traditional methods to reduce the impact of natural disasters, supplemented and reinforced by access to modern scientific and technical knowledge. Nevertheless, one must study and learn from the existing knowledge and know-how and try to ameliorate, develop and better apply them today.

9. Global social stability has become more fragile and reduction of natural disasters would reduce this fragility.

10. In disaster management the full continuum from relief through rehabilitation, reconstruction and development to prevention must be the underlying concept towards the reduction of human and physical losses as the ultimate objective. Disaster prevention is better than disaster response.

11. Achieving the goals, objectives and targets of the Decade, as adopted by the General Assembly in its relevant resolutions, would result in greatly reducing disaster losses.

12. Maximum participation at the community level mobilizes considerable potential and traditional expertise in the application of preventive measures.

B. Assessment of the status of disaster reduction mid-way into the Decade

Explanatory note

The assessment should provide the readers of the "Declaration" with an overview of the Decade results compared with the original recommendations, in order to lay the basis for a renewed strategic approach (comprising the Decade) which will justify and enforce the specific plan of action contained in Part II.

1. Awareness about the potential of disaster reduction is still limited to specialized circles and has not yet been successfully communicated to all sectors of society, in particular policy makers and the general public.

2. At the same time, however, activities at the local, national and international levels in training, technical applications and research, and in regional cooperation, in the first years of the Decade have had positive benefits in some regions in reducing disaster losses.

3. Equally, frameworks at the national level (national Decade Committees and Focal Points) and at the international level (the Decade secretariat, the Scientific and Technical Committee and the Special High-Level Council) have been established, which have laid the basis for intensified preventive and preparedness efforts in the second half of the Decade.

4. Education and training programmes and facilities for people professionally involved and the public at large have not been sufficiently developed with regard to potential disaster reduction.

5. The potential of the information media, industry, the scientific community and the private sector at large has not been sufficiently mobilized.

6. These new efforts have not systematically been part of multilateral and bilateral policies.

7. It must be noted that not all bodies of the United Nations system have contributed to the implementation of the Decade to the extent possible and as expressed by the General Assembly in the adoption of its resolution 44/236. It must also be noted that, during recent years, emphasis has again been placed primarily on disaster response both within the United Nations system and beyond. That has slowed down the momentum of the Decade's initial phase, as based on the consensus on the importance of action before disasters strike.

8. Achievements have been made during the first five years of the Decade, although they have been uneven and not in a concerted and systematic way as envisaged by the General Assembly. Only if those achievements are recognized, consolidated and accelerated will the Decade be able to reach its goals and objectives and, as such, to contribute to the development of a global culture of prevention.

9. The existing tools for improvements in disaster response, as part of a comprehensive approach towards disaster management, are not always made use of in a sufficient way.

10. There is a need to strengthen the resilience and self-confidence of local communities to cope with natural disasters through recognition and propagation of their traditional knowledge, practices and values in development activities.

11. Experience has demonstrated that, although not included in the original mandate of the Decade, the focus of disaster reduction should be enlarged to cover natural and other disaster situations, including environmental and technological disasters and their interrelationship, which can have a significant impact on social, economic, cultural, and environmental systems, in particular in developing countries.

C. Strategy for the Year 2000 and beyond

Explanatory note

The broad principles to be affirmed by the Conference in chapter I.A., and the assessment of achievements and gaps during the first half of the Decade call for a redefined strategy based on the reconfirmation of the objectives of the Decade and an improved and accelerated approach. This strategy is the basis for the Plan of Action contained in Part II, and will be developed under the following headings.

The following elements should be included in the Strategy:

1. Development of a global culture of prevention.

2. A policy of self-reliance in each vulnerable country and community with capacity-building, allocation and efficient use of resources.

3. Education and training in disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation.

4. Improvement of awareness in vulnerable communities, including a more active and constructive role of the media with regard to disaster reduction.

5. Involvement and active participation of the people, which is essential for disaster reduction, prevention and preparedness and is also conducive to improved risk management.

6. Improved risk assessment, broader monitoring and communication of forecasts and warnings.

7. Integrated policies for reduction of, preparedness for and response to natural disasters and other disaster situations, including environmental and technological hazards.

8. Coordination and cooperation among ongoing national and international disaster research activities and at universities and other technical and scientific institutions, having in mind that links between causes and effects, inherent to all types of disaster, should be investigated through interdisciplinary research.

9. Effective national legislation and administrative action, and placing higher priority at the political decision-making level.

10. Placing higher priority on the compilation and exchange of information on natural disaster reduction, especially at the regional and subregional levels through the strengthening of existing mechanisms and improved use of communication techniques.

11. Promotion of regional/subregional cooperation between countries exposed to the same natural hazards through exchange of information, joint disaster reduction activities and other formal or informal means, including the establishment or strengthening of regional and subregional centres.

12. Making available existing technology for broader application.

13. Integration of the private sector through promotion of business opportunities.

14. Promotion of the involvement of non-governmental organizations, including indigenous non-governmental organizations, in natural hazard management, in particular those dealing with environmental and related issues.

15. Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to assist in the reduction of losses from natural and related technological disasters, including coordination and evaluation of activities through the Decade and other mechanisms.

II. PLAN OF ACTION

Explanatory note

The Plan of Action will be presented as a series of concrete recommendations relating to the key points of the strategy. Each action recommended should take into consideration technical and resource-related feasibility and respond to a recognized requirement.

A. Recommendations for action

Explanatory notes

The recommendations in chapter II.A. will be structured in a way to define generally accepted broad-based activities, required and implementable at all levels involved, starting from the community level towards global activities. This is to be endorsed by the World Conference with the aim of providing a basis for evaluating concrete improvements by the end of the Decade.

All recommendations grouped in relation to the levels mentioned below should answer the questions what should be done, why it should be done, how it should be done and when it should be done and by whom.

1. Activities at the community and national levels

During the remaining part of the Decade all countries are called upon:

1. To express in a formal way the political will to reduce their vulnerability, through legislation or policy decisions at the highest level, which would require the progressive implementation of disaster assessment and reduction plans at the national and community levels.

2. To develop a risk assessment programme and emergency plans in order to focus efforts on disaster preparedness, response and mitigation, and to design projects for subregional, regional and international cooperation, as appropriate.

3. To develop a documented National Disaster Management Plan with an emphasis on disaster reduction.

4. As appropriate, to establish and/or strengthen National Committees for the Decade.

5. To encourage the taking of measures to upgrade the resistance of important infrastructure and lifelines.

6. To give due consideration to the role of local authorities in the enforcement of safety standards and rules and to strengthen the institutional capacities of natural disaster management at all levels.

7. To consider making use of non-governmental organizations' support for improved disaster reduction at the local level.

8. To incorporate disaster reduction prevention or mitigation in the development planning based on risk assessment.

9. To clearly identify specific aspects of disaster prevention that could use the knowledge or expertise that may be available from other countries or from the United Nations system.

10. To endeavour to document all disasters.

11. To incorporate cost-effective technologies in mitigation programmes, including forecasting and warning systems.

12. To establish and implement educational and information programmes generating public awareness in order to ensure support for and effectiveness of disaster reduction programmes.

13. To integrate the media as a contributing sector in awareness raising, education and opinion building for the recognition of the potential of disaster reduction to save human lives and protect property.

14. To set targets that specify how many distinct (i.e. local) disaster scenarios can reasonably be given systematic attention by the end of the Decade.

15. To aim at genuine community involvement and empowerment at all stages of disaster management programmes, and give due consideration to the active participation of women in order to facilitate capacity-building, which is an essential precondition for reducing vulnerability of communities to natural disasters.

16. To aim at the application of traditional knowledge, practices and values of local communities for disaster reduction, thereby recognizing these traditional coping mechanisms as a valuable contribution to the empowerment of local communities and the enabling of their spontaneous cooperation in all programmes of disaster prevention and mitigation.

2. Activities at the regional and subregional levels

Considering the many common aspects of disaster vulnerability among countries of a same region or subregion, cooperation among them should be strengthened by implementing the following actions:

1. Establishment or strengthening of subregional or regional centres for disaster reduction and prevention, which, in cooperation with international organizations and with a view to enhancing national capabilities, would perform one or more of the following functions:

(a) Collection and dissemination of documentation and information to improve public awareness of natural disasters and the potential to reduce their impact;

(b) Formulation of education and training programmes and technical information exchange aimed at human resource development;

(c) Support to and strengthening of natural disaster reduction mechanisms.

2. Given the importance of vulnerability of developing countries, particularly least developed countries, technical, material and financial resources should be made available in support of concerned subregional or regional centres to strengthen regional and national capacities to reduce natural disasters.

3. Improvement of communication on natural disasters among the countries of the region in the context of preparedness and early warning systems.

4. Establishment and/or strengthening of early warning mechanisms for disaster reduction at the subregional or regional level.

5. Commemoration of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction at these levels.

6. Establishment of mutual assistance agreements and joint projects for disaster reduction within and between regions.

7. Periodic review of progress made on disaster reduction at political level in regional forums.

8. Regional organizations should play an effective role in the implementation of concerned regional plans and programmes on natural disaster reduction.

9. The international community should give highest priority and special support to activities and programmes relating to natural disaster reduction at the subregional or regional level in order to promote cooperation between countries exposed to the same risks.

10. As decided by the General Assembly, special attention should be given to the least developed countries in support of their activities in the field of natural disaster reduction.

11. Regional arrangements should be carried out in close coordination with and should supplement the national programmes for disaster reduction.

12. The international community should assist the developing countries in establishing measures to integrate disaster prevention and reduction within the existing machinery and strategies at the national, regional and subregional levels for poverty eradication in order to achieve sustainable development.

3. Activities at the international level, in particular through bilateral arrangements and multilateral cooperation

To be considered:

1. In the spirit of international cooperation, the encouragement of all activities to reduce disasters, in particular those laid down by the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

2. It is recommended that extrabudgetary resources be provided for implementation of the Decade and, therefore, that voluntary contributions from Governments, international organizations and other sources, including the private sector, be strongly encouraged. To this end, the Secretary-General is urged to ensure an effective and efficient administration of the Trust Fund for the Decade, as established in line with General Assembly resolution 44/236.

3. Integration of natural disaster reduction into development assistance programmes.

4. Development projects should be designed to reduce, and not increase, vulnerability.

5. Exchange of information on disaster reduction policies and technologies.

6. Reaffirmation of the roles of the Special High-level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee in promoting Decade activities, in particular the awareness of the benefits of disaster reduction.

7. Enhancement of the functions of and cooperation between the United Nations, governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations related to disaster reduction, including more efficient use of existing resources.

8. Wider support for the existing mechanism within the United Nations system to expand its advice and practical assistance, as required, to countries facing natural disasters and other disaster situations, including environmental and technological hazards.

9. The need for adequate coordination of international activities in the field of disaster reduction should be emphasized and mechanisms established for this purpose should be strengthened. Such coordination should relate, in particular, to the formulation of development projects which provide assistance for disaster reduction and their evaluation.

10. Priority should be given to the establishment, or improvement, of warning systems and the effective dissemination of warnings.

11. Effective coordination of international disaster management, in particular by the United Nations system, is paramount for an integrated approach to disaster reduction and should, therefore, be strengthened.

12. The holding of a review conference on natural disaster reduction at the end of the Decade with a view to mapping-out a strategy into the twenty-first century.

B. Proposals to the Conference

Explanatory note

Chapter II.B should accommodate specific proposals from delegations and other participants, of which the World Conference will take note and which it might propose for compilation in a global reference document.

III. FOLLOW-UP ACTION

Explanatory note

Proposals and requests with regard to immediate and longer-term procedural follow-up action, which will ensure that the Document obtains the necessary endorsement for full and effective implementation.

1. Decision to transmit the report of the World Conference, containing the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

2. Request that the General Assembly consider the adoption of a resolution endorsing this outcome and of an appeal to all countries to continue working towards the objective of a safer world for the twenty-first century.

3. Transmit the outcome of the World Conference to the mid-term global review conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries, to be held in 1995 as decided by the Assembly in its resolution 48/171.

4. Reaffirm the crucial importance of á substantial reduction in the loss of lives and in the physical damage caused by disasters by the year 2000 and of continuing the disaster reduction process beyond the end of this century, as appropriate.

5. Request the Secretary-General to ensure that the outcome of the Conference be given as wide as possible dissemination, including transmission to relevant international and regional organizations.

6. Request the secretariat of the Decade to communicate the outcome of the Conference to national committees and focal points for the Decade, relevant non-governmental organizations, scientific and technical associations and the private sector.